

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022
Ronda McClain

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Ronda McClain, and I am a registered voter in the city of Bridgeport.

Bridge House (a program in Bridgeport for people living with a mental illness) for me became a resource lifeline and second home for me since day one upon becoming a member. As I reflect back to that day entering the program, I was homeless. Bridge House staff guided me through the process to find housing through their housing resource unit and helped me find an apartment. I eventually found one and moved in. Bridge House helped me with provisions to furnish my apartment with furniture and household needs from their in-house boutique and their second-hand furniture shop funded by community donations.

After I was situated in my new apartment, Bridge House staff introduced me to a program for creating goals and motivated me to follow through with them within a timeframe set by my own schedule that would fit my lifestyle and to complete them periodically with no stress.

I was curious about how each unit in the program functioned, because I needed to find out which unit I wanted to do my volunteer work in. My choices were to start with the boutique, media and communications, housing, the food bank, the member bank, the cafeteria, the membership services unit, and the education area. There was more, but these were my picks.

The education unit became my favorite part of the program because, at the end of the day, I wanted to go back to school. I was also involved with other programs outside of Bridge House which helped me to find pathways to maintain my wellness through my strengths.

I am so grateful that Bridge house had a scholarship program, which helped me pay for some of my classes and books. I eventually got my degree in Human Services.

During the pandemic, Bridge House always calls me to find out if I need any food from the food bank, or if I need anything else. They are such a blessing for me.

Please consider this when the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services comes up. These services are very vital to those of us living with mental health conditions.

Thank you for reading my testimony.